



GEMI – The gendered contributions to mitigation in coffee-based agroforestry systems in the northwest of Vietnam

CARE in Vietnam is implementing the ‘Technology Enhanced Agricultural Livelihood’ project (TEAL) using Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) as the main platform for engagement and intervention with coffee farmers in Mai Son district (Son La province) and Muong Ang district (Dien Bien province). VSLAs are a mechanism for women to meet regularly (once to twice a month) to save and access capital for small investments in any livelihood activities of interest to them. This is expected to empower women in terms of household welfare, decision making, and participation in value chain activities.

Coffee farmers in the northwest of Vietnam have been growing coffee for less than 10 years, typically without shade trees. This form of monoculture increases environmental and economic risks to farmers. By contrast, coffee-based agroforestry systems are known for the ability to buffer weather risks, diversify incomes and mitigate climate change.

The GEMI research aims to evaluate the impacts of the VSLA model on its contributions to generating gender and mitigation benefits. The two main research questions include:

1. Do VSLAs create conditions to empower women to improve household welfare and mitigate climate change?
2. Do VSLAs influence value chain dynamics through factors such as (but not limited to) changing loan structures, providing access to buyers, improving collective bargaining power for higher prices, adding value through improved production quality and processing?

Progress:

- The research began in April 2018 with a baseline survey of 300 coffee farmers in Son La and Dien Bien province, consisting of a VSLA group (150) and a non-VSLA group (150), to understand current gender roles, agroforestry practices, decision-making and participation in the coffee value chain.
- Research participants have since been receiving trainings on gender, financial literacy, and coffee-based agroforestry provided by CARE and ICRAF.
- An endline survey will be conducted in Oct-Nov 2019 to compare empowerment and mitigation benefits between VSLA group and non-VSLA group.